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THE PARISH OF CORPUS CHRISTI TONBRIDGE
AND ST PETER'S HADLOW
TWINNED WITH LINK PARISHES IN MALAWI

Give and it will be given to you... The measure you give shall be the measure you receive
Luke 6.38

Newsletter no: 25
Date: April 2006

Dear Parishioner

As you read this, one of our Team, *Anne Mahoney*, will be in Malawi. We expect her to return with much news, photographs and video footage, to show us the ongoing effects of our twinning project. She has taken a big step in travelling alone to this poverty stricken country and we ask that you remember her in your prayers throughout her three week stay.

In our February newsletter, we featured *Chiringa* and the pre-school playgroup. In this issue we feature *Nsanje*, co-ordinated by *Brian Wilkins*.

Nsanje was the first Parish to benefit from our twinning project when Fr Nazario was based there. This community is in the deep south of the country, bordered on three sides by *Mozambique* and only 500 metres from one border, so *Nsanje Parish* serves some communities from that country. The Parish, with 19 area churches, covers an area of 300 square miles most of which is served by dirt roads, a hazard when travelling during the six months of the rainy season.

Nsanje Primary School

The school was built in 1921 and has since received little or no maintenance. When we first enquired about conditions, it was sad to learn that it was just a block of buildings with no doors or windows to the outside. No material help could be given at this time because there were no secure storage facilities for teaching aids, desks, chairs etc. During the dark hours anyone could enter the premises and take whatever they thought worth having.

Attendances fell sharply during the recent drought, because the children did not have enough food to sustain them during the school day. Our recent appeal has done much to alleviate this problem and the school is now back to normal with standards and attendance levels vastly improved..

So what have we been doing to help these children?

- *Brian* is in regular contact with the Parish Priest Fr Francis, the school Headmaster, Patrick Janasi and his deputy, Christopher Langwe.
- They have been supplied with a laptop computer, printer and a digital camera. With these they have been able to send us many photographs, showing progress of the work undertaken to the school and the vast feeding programme undertaken with our help.
- We have supplied a Television and DVD/Video player to assist teaching and they can now view films of our parish activities.
- We have supplied sports kit and equipment for their football and netball teams with money kindly donated by the Catenians.

- Doors and windows have been fitted to some of the buildings and these now have burglar bars to deter thieves.
- We have helped with various refurbishments and decorations.
- We have paid for electric wiring to the school office.

Brian has established a link between Nsanje School and St Margaret's school to involve both sets of children in exchanging letters and small artworks. Both schools have delegated a teacher to head the project and so far, 52 children from St Margaret's have sent letters, some with pictures.

Brian has sent with Anne Mahoney, a lightweight flatbed scanner, which will allow the Nsanje teachers to copy the children's letters and artwork into their computer, to be emailed to St Margaret's. Anne has also taken money, to pay for the connection of electricity to the school office.

We are told that our twinning is having a very beneficial effect on both teachers and pupils. All are working with much more energy in an attempt to improve learning standards at the school.

Fr Francis is having a telephone line connected to the school office, for Internet connection. At present the school has to contact us using Fr Francis's house phone. Nsanje School could well be the first primary school in Malawi to be connected to the Internet.

What next?

Our Team is now looking at a request for continued help with:

- Installation of electricity to the school classrooms. (They only have power in the parish hall at present)
- Refurbishment of three toilets.
- Office and classroom furniture.

Finally, a message was received on 7th March from Fr Francis. This is what he said:

"On 25th February our Parish Council agreed to have a Mass with special prayers on 3rd March 2006, praying for all the parishioners of Corpus Christi parish. The prayers were held at the Parish church and all school pupils were present, teachers and all Christians.

Everyone here is thanking God for giving you to us as a gift. The greatest gift we have received from God as a Parish is you. Blessed be our God."

For the **latest News & Information** on Nsanje & all aspects of Malawi Twin, see the large display board in Fisher Hall. Or log onto the Corpus Christi Website www.corpuschristi-tonbridge.org.uk then follow the link to Malawi.

The raising and sending of money may be a one way feature of our twinning but we are receiving their precious gift of prayer – all they have to give.

Peter Wells

On behalf of your Malawi Team

"At the eve of our lives we will be judged on our love"
St John of the Cross